

Serial No.: 09/978,218

Amendments to the Claims:

In the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Claim 1 (original): An improved method of selectively annealing a needle wherein at least a portion of the needle is positioned in close proximity with an electromagnetic induction coil, and current is provided through the coil to selectively heat the portion of the needle; the improvement comprising:

- a) providing the needle with a curved body,
- b) configuring the coil with a flat configuration defining a coil plane,
- c) positioning at least a portion of the needle adjacent to the flat coil wherein the curved body of the needle is positioned parallel to the coil plane, and
- d) providing current through the flat coil to selectively heat the portion of the needle.

Claim 2 (canceled)

Claim 3 (currently amended): The ~~needle of claim 2~~ improved method of claim 1 wherein the needle is a surgical needle.

Claim 4 (currently amended): The ~~needle~~ improved method of claim 3 wherein the surgical needle has a suture affixed to the needle.